

He is one of the most powerful men in Congress - Harlem Democrat Charles Rangel. But now he is under fire on several fronts. The latest controversy - a pet project - and questions about how he is raising the money to finance it.

"I cannot think of anything I am more proud of."

What made Rangel proud made other members of Congress furious. Last year, the powerful congressman had just funneled \$2 million in tax dollars for a public service center to be named for him.

"We call it 'the monument to me' because you're creating - in this case - Congressman Rangel is creating a monument to himself," said California Republican John Campbell.

And now there's more controversy over the Rangel Center for Public Service, to be built on the City College Campus in Harlem. There are published reports that Rangel may be soliciting donations for the center, from corporations with business before the powerful Ways and Means Committee that he controls.

Susan Lerner, of the watchdog group Common Cause, says Rangel should know better.

"It has the appearance of being corrupt...you do me a favor, I'll do you a favor...that's not the way the people's business should be conducted," said Lerner.

This latest controversy comes just days after Rangel angrily defended his use of four rent stabilized apartments in Harlem, where he pays thousands of dollars a month less than the market rate.

On Monday, Rangel said he would give up one apartment used as a campaign office. By law, stabilized apartments are only for use as primary residences. But that won't end problems on that front. Monday, the National Legal and Policy Center filed a complaint with the Federal Elections Commission, charging that Rangel broke the law by accepting the discounted rent.

"You can't have illegal corporate contributions and when you have a very steep discount like this that is a corporate contribution is anything of value, even discounts," said Ken Boehm of the National Legal and Policy Center.

The Federal Election Commission could order Rangel to pay back the amount of the rent discount, an estimated \$100,000. It could impose additional fines.